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Velázquez: Las Meninas and the Late Royal Portraits. Exhibition catalogue edited by Javier Portús. Translated by Wade Matthews and Laura Suffield. London/New York: Thames & Hudson. 2014. 176 pp.; 83 colour + 9 black and white illustrations.

This is an English edition of the catalogue published in Spanish to accompany the exhibition *Velázquez y la familia de Felipe IV/ Velázquez and the Family of Philip IV* held at the Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid, 8 October 2013–9 February 2014. The difference in title between catalogue and exhibition highlights a slight uncertainty of focus around the several strands covered, and their relationship to an overarching theme. Nevertheless, the three essays and the catalogue entries offer much valuable context on studio training and practice, the patronage of the Habsburgs, and the links between court portraiture and the culture of the court generally during the reign of Philip IV. The catalogue likewise provides a useful complement to *Diego Velázquez: The Early Court Portraits* (2012), also edited by Javier Portús, for an exhibition at the Meadows Museum, Dallas. In the opening essay, 'Diego Velázquez, 1650-60: Portraiture and Court Culture', Portús claims that portraiture is 'one of the guiding threads that allows us to link the King's family life, politics of the time, the outstanding level of quality in painting and the sophistication of contemporary court literature' (18). Noting that Velázquez was made a Knight of the Order of Santiago by Philip IV in 1659, and thus was at last officially recognized as having the same status as the dramatist Pedro Calderón de la Barca, who had been knighted in 1636, the essay cites a number of examples of the central role played by painting and, in particular, portraits, in plays performed at court, often as part of celebrations marking royal events. Calderón's *Darlo todo y no dar nada* was first performed in 1651 to celebrate Queen Mariana's birthday and the birth of the Infanta Margarita, and again in 1656, the year in which *Las Meninas* is generally believed to have been painted, although the cross of Santiago on Velázquez's chest was added after he was knighted. Portús points to the theatrical qualities of the masterpiece by Velázquez, as well as to parallels in the relationship between Alexander the Great and his painter Apelles in the play, and that of Philip IV and Velázquez, implicit in the painting and played out in real life.

The essay by Andrea Sommer-Mathis succinctly demonstrates the central role played by portraits within the web of conjugal ties made during the reign of Philip IV between the Spanish and Austrian lines of the Habsburg dynasty to strengthen shared political and religious interests. Their use as proxies or promotion tools in diplomatic missions and especially marriage and peace negotiations helps to explain the need for multiple versions of royal portraits produced in the studio system, such as those of the infantas by Velázquez and his pupil and son-in-law Juan Martínez del Mazo, many of them now in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna.

Velázquez's studio, and his two most important successors Mazo and Juan Carreño de Miranda, both of whom have been for too long overshadowed by the great master, are the main themes of the third and final essay by Miguel Morán. The works of Mazo and Carreño, and the ways in which they continued and developed Velázquez's style, especially in the use of space and colour, is one of the most fascinating and welcome aspects explored here, as well as through the catalogue entries and beautiful colour reproductions, thus extending the chronology of this study to c. 1680. Carreño's portraits, with their fluid handling of paint and unerring sense of colour, have a beauty that clearly owes much to the dazzling artistry of Velázquez and is yet quite distinct. The case of Mazo is more problematic: the closeness of his style to that of his master has meant that art historians have struggled to understand his distinctive artistic personality and to agree a separate body of work attributed to him for positive reasons, rather than simply because paintings were considered not quite good enough to be by Velázquez himself. The problems are too complex and long-standing for consensus amongst scholars in all areas to be a realistic outcome of the exhibition and the present publication. Much of Morán's essay (as well as cat. 21) is devoted to one of the most famous and contentious cases: the Prado's *Infanta Margarita in a Pink Dress*, traditionally thought to be Velázquez's last work, though many scholars also believed that it had been

completed or retouched by Mazo. This magnificent portrait has now been fully attributed to Mazo by the Prado, though not without the dissent of such influential figures as Carmen Garrido, who carried out technical analysis of the painting. The possibility of another hand at work here has also been raised by scholars such as María del Mar Doval Trueba. Even more knotty is the problem of the small version of *Las Meninas* (cat. 17), recorded in the inventory of the Marqués del Carpio in 1688, later owned by Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos and acquired by William Bankes for his collection at Kingston Lacy, Dorset in the nineteenth century, when it was still believed to be an autograph sketch by Velázquez. This view was recently defended by Matías Díaz Padrón, though the Prado has firmly reattributed it to Mazo. Can all the works now reattributed to Mazo be by him? The (re)construction of this artist's oeuvre remains a work in progress, and the arguments in each case require much more space, including interpretation of technical analysis, than was practical in this catalogue. Nevertheless, the Prado deserves praise for bringing the debate to a wider public, especially as it now publishes all catalogues that accompany its major shows in English as well as Spanish. Occasional infelicities such as 'placard' rather than 'label' (75) are perhaps inevitable given the pressure of the current frequency of exhibitions and catalogues.

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